



DRAFT

**FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY
LEVY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**
Tuesday, April 25, 2006 • 4:00–5:30 p.m.
Norman B. Rice Conference Room



MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Someireh Amirfaiz, Tim Ceis (for Mayor Nickels), Cheryl Chow, Frances Contreras, Councilmember David Della, Kris Hildebrandt, Antonio Hopson, Marie Kurose, Raj Manhas, David Okimoto, John Pehrson, Debra Sullivan

OTHERS PRESENT:

Lin Carlson (Seattle Public Schools), TJ Cosgrove (Public Health Seattle-King County), Jerry DeGriek (Human Services Dept), Jessica de Barros (Office for Education), Donnie Grabowski (OFE), Kathleen Groshong (HSD), Aimee Hirabayashi (Middle School Support), Donna Hudson (Parks), Patricia Lee (City Council Central Staff), Jill Lewis (SPS), Patricia McInturff (HSD), Bernie Matsuno (Dept of Neighborhoods), Holly Miller (OFE), Erica Mullen (YMCA), Thelma Payne (SPS), Patti Petesch (Parks), Liezl Tomas Rebugio (HSD), Mary Jean Ryan (Office of Policy and Management), Sid Sidorowicz (OFE), Adie Simmons (SPS), Cheryl Swab (DOF), Anna Treadway (HSD), Billie Young (HSD)

Tim Ceis called the meeting to order. Tim Ceis moved to approve the minutes from the March 21 LOC meeting and the minutes were so approved.

Philadelphia Inter-City Study Trip

The meeting began with a brief discussion of the recent Philadelphia Inter-City Study trip. John Pehrson pointed out good use of local resources by one of the public schools and that the Philadelphia school district receives \$1K more per student for that school. He also mentioned that the Superintendent/CEO works with all schools (charter, public, private) and that the district has disbanded middle schools in favor of K-8s. Raj Manhas discussed how a crisis there had led to change and questioned whether the infrastructure could be sustained. He discussed the difficulty urban schools face in moving from good to great. Holly Miller discussed how Philadelphia is good at community partnerships and mentioned that the school district is contracting with private organizations to develop curriculum. Marie Kurose asked if there was any focus on the achievement gap, and the response was yes, that all programs were focusing on this.

Mid-Course Review Process

Holly Miller thanked Sid Sidorowicz and Jessica de Barros for their hard work in preparing the Mid-Year report. Holly mentioned that original targets were based on good judgment but that hard data were not available. During the baseline review, in some cases it became clear that student achievement was higher than expected. The baseline is being used as the basis for setting new targets, but OFE won't have outcome data until next fall, following the WASL test results.

Holly described the "value-added" terminology that would be used during the mid-course report briefing as the number of students meeting standards above the baseline level. These are students who had not met standards before participating in the Levy-funded programs. She then

reviewed the process for indicator and outcome target review in proposing mid-course corrections, which included a March 29 retreat, team sessions to review targets, two LOC brown bag briefings, and then, following this meeting, target recommendations to the Mayor to inform 2007 budget decisions. Councilmember Della asked when the LOC would be briefed on budget changes resulting from mid-course program changes. Tim Ceis mentioned that the LOC would be briefed before the budget goes to the City Council. Holly extended her appreciation to the Levy program teams, stating that they have worked hard on the process to date.

Jessica de Barros briefed the LOC on mid-year indicators and recommended targets and changes for 2007. The following is a summary of discussion by program area.

Early Learning

John Pehrson asked how the 70% DRA target for children who participate in the Pre-K program compares to the baseline data and Jessica noted that it is higher. Debra Sullivan asked if the target of 206 children whose teachers participate in training includes the current 81 children and Jessica replied that it does not.

Cheryl Chow asked if there would be funds for teachers to administer the Speed DIAL assessment. Jessica de Barros replied that kindergarten teachers haven't agreed yet to administer this and that the budget hasn't been completed. Holly Miller mentioned that the Pre-K program providers, not the Seattle Public Schools, would do the assessments this year. Mary Jean Ryan said that we need to resolve this issue of kindergarten readiness assessment and that Governor Gregoire's Early Learning Initiative will probably result in the need for a new assessment. She mentioned that the Partnership Agreement requires a pilot of the DIAL and it didn't happen. We need to figure out how to engage kindergarten teachers on this subject. Cheryl Chow noted that the teachers had received training but that a budget to administer the assessment was not available. Holly Miller noted that a long-term goal is to work with the Seattle Public Schools to develop an internalized kindergarten readiness assessment that isn't viewed as externally imposed and that will be useful to teachers. Antonio Hopson asked whether this was an issue of time, money, or both, and Marie Kurose asked how kindergarten teachers currently do assessments. Aimee Hirabayashi clarified that SPS used to have a good screening process until the budget was cut. She added that Ramona Pierson joined the academic team and this will help reinstate an assessment tool. Billie Young said the Speed DIAL shouldn't involve an increase in time to administer and that HSD and SPS are looking to use a normed tool whose results can be aggregated and that will replace the current tool.

Councilmember Della asked for an explanation of the slower ramp up of preschool slots. Jessica de Barros explained that this was based on the fact that only 134 of the 280 slots were filled, that there was delayed opening of sites until January and because of the effort to start up new programs.

John Pehrson said we need to get on a more common basis for addressing the interface between Pre-K and SPS and that they can't be measured in two different ways. Holly Miller added that SPS had appointed an Early Childhood Coordinator, that the City would like to see preschool programs in school buildings, and that more work on this was needed.

Family Support

Someireh Amirfaiz asked what it meant to “serve” students. Thelma Payne clarified that these were students who had been identified as having an academic need. Someireh Amirfaiz asked whether these were comprehensive services, and Thelma Payne said that students were served based on need, which was defined in partnership with the family and school.

Family and Community Involvement

Marie Kurose asked whether the targets were not lower than the current baseline and Jessica de Barros said the targets represent additional students who have not previously met academic standards; the targets would add value to the baseline. John Pehrson asked about the community-based family involvement grants, and Jessica de Barros and Adie Simmons responded that they will continue to work in schools receiving the grants. Marie Kurose asked if they would have targets also, and Adie Simmons responded that yes, as part of the contract, they will have WASL targets.

Elementary CLCs

Marie Kurose asked if the target was value-added and Jessica de Barros responded that it was not, but the recommended target of 24% was higher than the baseline for students passing all three WASL tests (19%). Councilmember Della asked how you get a higher target with fewer sites, and Sid Sidorowicz responded that more children will be served with fewer sites. John Pehrson asked which organizations were running these programs, and Sid Sidorowicz responded it is currently the YMCA, Tiny Tots, and the Boys & Girls Club.

Middle School Support

Marie Kurose noted that the \$2.8 million budget is quite high when you look at the cost for each successful outcome. Someireh Amirfaiz asked why the targets were so low. Antonio Hopson noted that programs are concerned about overshooting their capabilities. Marie Kurose said that when you look at the budget and outcomes, the return on investment looks poor. Cheryl Chow noted that we need to keep this group of kids interested in school so they don’t make bad choices. Holly Miller noted that the baseline passage rate is about 46%. Mary Jean Ryan noted that addressing both Marie Kurose and Cheryl Chow’s issues is very challenging and that the LOC needs to focus on this over time. She noted that if we are serious about influencing academics, we need to put more rigor in after-school programs. Many program changes have taken place, but more substantial change is needed to really impact academic achievement. She noted that research shows that a 15% increase in test scores is the best outcome in the country for this type of program.

Cheryl Chow noted that the original Levy started with community support for bringing more resources to schools. The goal was to keep students connected to school. David Okimoto said that the programs have multiple goals besides the WASL and we shouldn’t ignore those benefits. Marie Kurose asked where kids would be if they don’t pass the WASL since it is critical for student success. Cheryl Chow noted that the WASL is looming but that Olympia is listening to educators, and the WASL shouldn’t be the only means to get a diploma. She is optimistic that the WASL will be reduced in importance. Frances Contreras asked what we are doing to document the qualitative as well as the quantifiable benefits.

Kris Hildebrandt asked why this was the first program to show a “dosage” target since that is important to all programs. Jessica responded that the dosage for CLC attendance simply came up as a critical assumption to make in setting targets for the program.

Someireh Amirfaiz asked if we can increase targets, and Tim Ceis responded that if she wanted to recommend higher targets to the Mayor, to do so at this meeting. Cheryl Chow said she would like to stay with staff recommendations now. OFE has received a great deal of input and has recommended realistic goals. Kris Hildebrandt asked whether contracts are performance-based and if agencies receive bonuses if they reach “stretch” goals. Holly Miller responded by saying that OFE is sensitive to the fact that this is a new program, and we don’t want to push too hard initially but that we may need to take some big leaps to reach outcomes. Someireh Amirfaiz said it is important to push for higher outcomes and asked whether we were setting realistic or low expectations. Debra Sullivan agreed noting that, with children, we should have a higher expectation and that grownups should also have a “stretch” goal.

Cheryl Chow noted that the program relies on being attractive to students. She didn’t want to risk losing students by making the program too academically rigorous. Debra Sullivan suggested increasing the goal for how often students participate.

Cheryl Chow said that she didn’t support the Levy to raise WASL scores but to give schools additional resources. John Pehrson said that we promised voters three things with the Levy: academic achievement, school readiness, and reduced dropouts/increased graduation rates. Mary Jean Ryan added that this Levy is different from the previous ones in setting specific outcomes. John Pehrson noted that we have scarce resources and should be prudent with how we use Levy funds. David Okimoto asked whether we sold voters this after-school program or the WASL outcome. After reviewing the Levy ordinance and legislation, David Okimoto stated the goal of the Levy was to meet the three outcomes described previously by John Pehrson and that the Levy should be flexible in its investments in order to accomplish those three outcomes. He said we need to get at these three directives and need to track outcomes. If these goals are not achieved, programs should be changed. Someireh Amirfaiz stated we need higher program expectations. Antonio Hopson said that he understood the need to stretch kids and wanted to balance it out with other measures beyond the WASL. He is waiting for a trend, noting that the numbers are low.

John Pehrson said that if the program were measured only by WASL, the low outcomes are hard to justify. But if the program were measured by other means, we would need to understand them and measure them. We would have a problem explaining this level of outcomes to the voters. Holly Miller pointed out that we are tracking a variety of indicators for the program. Frances Contreras didn’t want to underscore the current crisis but wanted to caution the issue of promoting only one assessment. She added that we need to find multiple ways of being rigorous. Kris Hildebrandt said we should make indicators more prominent. Councilmember Della agreed that the Council would like to see an improvement in indicators over time and that we need to know where we are and be able to explain to the public. Tim Ceis said that programs need to adapt over time if goals are not being realized. He noted that we are establishing baseline information and need to review this over time. He said that trust is key, and the Mayor is committed to seeing academic improvement using the WASL scores as indicators.

High-Risk Youth

John Pehrson asked if we were narrowing the definition of success by focusing the outcome for staying in school only on progressing to the next grade level. Jessica de Barros said that the existing academic outcomes will continue to be tracked as indicators.

Health

Jerry DeGrieck said that clinics will screen all 5,000 students served for academic risk. David Okimoto asked what the health providers will do to affect WASL and Jerry DeGrieck noted that Health was crafting some interventions that will affect academic success, particularly with mental health.

Concluding Remarks

Tim Ceis noted that he sensed some unrest and disagreement over targets for middle school support and asked LOC members if they would like to put this item back on the agenda for next month. There was LOC support for this item.

The meeting was adjourned.